

PREPARATION FOR MINISTERIAL WORK.

In our Bible reading we are impressed with the prominence given to the special preparation of those who under God should take places as teachers in the Church.

In the Gospels we find the Lord Jesus selecting twelve disciples, and keeping them under his training two or three years. They did not need any study of the languages, for as we suppose, the Hebrew language was theirs from childhood. With the ritual of the Church they were doubtless familiar. They knew the decalogue and the history of the Church, yet Jesus kept them under training between two and three years. They needed mental training. Jesus knew that in the course of a few months some new truths would be set before them—for instance, the fact of his own resurrection—and he would have their mental training such that they could apprehend the truth and that they could present it to the people. Such was the effect of their training that on the day of Pentecost three thousand persons accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Then, too, they needed development of heart. In the earlier part of their training they were ready to call down fire from heaven on those who offered a slight to their Master. At a later day they indulged in no such spirit.

When Paul was converted he went down into Arabia and spent three years. In what did he spend these years? Were they not a season of prayer and spiritual development? Else why was he apparently withheld during these months from active work in the Gospel?

In the second Epistle to Timothy, Paul gives instructions for the future conduct of the Church. In Chapter two, he indicates the importance of training those who should preach. "The things which thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men who shall be able to teach others also."

Along with these, put the fact that even under the Mosaic economy there were schools of the prophets. And note further that the priests were not allowed to exercise their official duties till they were thirty years of age. Surely at an earlier age they were physically able to do the work of the Temple. Yet God kept them waiting and maintained them out of the tithes, and let them spend perhaps ten years in preparation for the work of the priesthood.

In this month of November we are to contribute to the support of the young men who have been called to the ministry. The Lord would have them well prepared for their office. He desires that they be trained carefully for it. To us he gives the opportunity of providing for their training.

Of the candidates for the ministry it is specially true that not many of the rich seem to be called. Perhaps by reason of their early indulgences they would not make the best ministers. God has called many who need financial help that they may prepare themselves for their life work. Our many vacant churches need these ministers, need them at the earliest possible day. Let us put forth our efforts to promote their studies, by a prompt and generous contribution, this month.

PREVENTION AND CURE OF DISEASE.

Beyond question true science has ever been the handmaid of true religion. In an earlier age, a bigoted and intolerant Church outlawed scientific advancement, and in this later age science, falsely so-called, would fain outlaw the established faith of the Church. Happily for the world, demonstrated scientific truth confirms and promotes revealed religion, and true religion is and ever has been, the pioneer in the advancement of scientific knowledge.

For manifest reasons Christian service has always been devoted prominently to the relief of physical suffering, which implies the prevention and cure of disease. The unselfishness and sympathy which are qualities of sound Christian character prompt to this service, an enlightened understanding of one's proper relation to his fellows, makes duty clear and a sanctified conscience impels to generous and persevering helpfulness.

Within recent years advances in medical science have been rapid. What a boon to humanity is the discriminating use of anesthetics which has been originated and directed by modern medical art. Thousands of lives are being saved annually by the use of antitoxines, so that some of the most virulent diseases are no longer the menace to the home and the community that they once were. Malignant forms of fever are being restricted in their ravages, and we are told that with the exercise of intelligence and reasonable care, typhoid will be almost a thing of the past, and malarial fevers will be immeasurably reduced. Rapid advances are being made in the treatment of tuberculosis and similar disorders.

Emphasis is being placed by competent physicians on prevention of disease. This is the ultimate aim of medical science and art. Their highest fruition is to preserve the health of the individual, the community, the race. The physicians' ideal will never be fully realized; his goal will never be reached in the ordinary processes of life. Worry, sorrow, sin, which promote disease, are permanent conditions. Injurious elements in air and water and food, overwork, intemperance, privation, evil passions, all conduce to bodily infirmity. Advances are nevertheless rapid. As indicating the measure of success in this direction, we are informed by statisticians that the average of human life has been increased within the memory of those who are now in middle life, by three or four years. This has been accomplished largely by preventive measures, especially in dealing with diseases which are either epidemic or are more prevalent and virulent in certain localities.

That Christianity has been the great promoter of this advance in human knowledge and in its application is easily demonstrated and scarcely admits of question. The most Christian nations have been the most advanced in medical knowledge. Christian physicians take front rank in their profession. Christian missions have revolutionized the healing art in almost every part of the world by introducing the medical missionary wherever they have gone. Christian philanthropy has founded hospitals and schools of medicine, at home and abroad. Christian homes have given the larger number of men and women who devote their lives to relieving and preventing physical